

Cross-cutting Issue 8: State-Level Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluating the Implementation of Mental Health Commission Recommendations

A state-level mental health system infrastructure and adequate staffing are needed to implement the recommendations, as well as monitor and evaluate their implementation. The state-level function would be underpinned by an oversight structure that would bring expertise representing stakeholders in the system. This could take the form of a governor-appointed “advisory or oversight” committee.

A state-level decision-making body (perhaps the Mental Health Oversight Committee) is needed to systematically identify issues, address system and policy issues, and disseminate guidance to assist local agencies in interpreting and implementing new policies. This might take the form of model policies, tools, and other products that would result in administrative efficiency and more consistency across the state. This body would include representation from CMHSP, PIHPs, consumers, families, and providers.

It will be essential to enhance and restructure the state agency and some of its functions. A key will be more formal state-level interagency collaboration at the policy, program, and fiscal levels in order to maximize services and resources for mental health and avoid duplication and waste.

Several roles for the state mental health agency include expertise and guidance to the local providers regarding policies, clinical issues, data, and financing. A state-level infrastructure can serve to provide timely technical assistance, as well as rapid disposition of issues of relevance across the state and dissemination of best practices.

Use of appropriate technology can facilitate communication between the state and local providers, as well as across state agencies and among local providers. A rapid design of a secure information technology system is essential to the state’s capacity to implement the commission recommendations. While the initial costs may be large, it will be important to consider the short- and long-term savings in efficiencies and, as importantly, the benefit to the consumers in improved quality and safety.

Finally, one method for long-term monitoring of the commission recommendations is to have the elements and timelines of those recommendations incorporated in the mental health appropriation boilerplate language. This would serve to further institutionalize the recommendations and their implementation.